

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MINUTES
September 26, 2007

Chair Knox White called the Transportation Commission to order at 7:40 p.m.

1. **ROLL CALL** – Roll was called and the following recorded.

Members Present:

John Knox White
Michael Krueger
Robb Ratto
Robert McFarland
Eric Schatmeier
Srikant Subramaniam
Neilson Tam

Staff Present:

Obaid Khan, Supervising Civil Engineer
Barry Bergman, Transportation Coordinator

Chair Knox White welcomed *Commissioner Tam* to the Transportation Commission.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. August 22, 2007

Commissioner Krueger moved approval of the minutes for the August 22, 2007, meeting minutes. *Commissioner Ratto* seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-0-1. *Commissioner Schatmeier* abstained.

2. **AGENDA CHANGES**

Chair Knox White suggested hearing Item 7B first.

Commissioner Krueger inquired whether the Water Transportation Authority and the new legislation would be included in discussion of the ferry. *Chair Knox White* replied that they may discuss it, but no action may be taken.

4. **COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS**

Chair Knox White noted that the Multimodal Circulation Subcommittee, Pedestrian Plan, not the TSM/TDM Subcommittees had not met. He noted that the Line 63 Subcommittee met earlier in the evening.

Commissioner Krueger noted that the Line 63 Subcommittee reviewed the options that had been discussed in the previous meeting, and confirmed some of the choices that had

been made. The City staff/AC Transit staff report had been received, responding to the Subcommittee's questions. They were able to narrow their recommendations in preparation for bringing it back to the Transportation Commission in October.

In response to an inquiry by *Chair Knox White* regarding the release of the report, *Staff Bergman* replied that the Subcommittee was expected to meet with affected residents prior to the Transportation Commission meeting, and that would be incorporated into the staff report.

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Open public hearing.

There were no speakers.

Close public hearing.

7. NEW BUSINESS

7B. City of Alameda Ferry Program: Short Range Transit Plan FY 2008-2018 (SRTP). Outcome: TC to comment and endorse the Ferry Program's Short Range Transit Plan

Ernest Sanchez, Ferry Manager, City of Alameda, presented the staff report, as required to maintain the program funding. He noted that the SRTP covered a period of approximately 11 years, and described the expected financial environment for the Alameda-Oakland and Alameda-Harbor Bay Ferries. He noted that both ferry services were doing very well, with strong ridership; the Alameda-Oakland Ferry carried 440,000 riders annually, and the Alameda-Harbor Bay Ferry carried 134,000 riders per year. He discussed recent legislation, and added that SB976 was recently passed by the California State Legislature. It would establish a new agency, the Bay Area Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA), which would replace the existing Bay Area Water Transit Authority.

Staff Khan understood that staff would bring a report to City Council on October 2, 2007, regarding this issue, as directed by the City Manager. He noted that a letter to Sacramento may be drafted. He suggested that the Transportation Commissioners attend the City Council meeting to express their concerns.

Commissioner Schatmeier expressed concern about the change in governance structure, and inquired about the status of the legislation.

Mr. Sanchez replied that it had been passed by both houses of the Legislature, and is on Governor Schwarzenegger's desk for signature.

Commissioner Schatmeier was still concerned about the changes of the structure, and noted that Alameda's Mayor was currently on the Board; he understood that the new

Board would be composed of individuals appointed by the Legislature and the Governor.

Mr. Sanchez confirmed that was correct, and that the current Water Transit Authority had 11 Board members, to be replaced by a new Board consisting of five members, three appointed by the Governor and two appointed by the Legislature.

Commissioner Schatmeier expressed concern that that change may result in some loss of local influence and control over what happened in the future, and hoped that the Governor may reappoint existing Board members. He was concerned that the change may work against Alameda's interest.

Chair Knox White suggested that the City Council send a strong letter to the Governor's office, and noted that he tended not to sign items without the input of the people involved in setting them up.

In response to an inquiry by *Commissioner Ratto* regarding the impetus for the legislators to make this change, *Mr. Sanchez* replied that the legislation cited the need to develop a comprehensive and effected emergency water transit response in the event of a region-wide emergency. It argued that in order to effectively develop and implement such a program, the transfer of Alameda's and Vallejo's ferries would be needed.

Commissioner Ratto noted that the Alameda and Vallejo ferries were instrumental in the emergency aid after the portion of the Bay Bridge collapsed following the 1989 earthquake. He suggested that the Transportation Commissioners attend the City Council meeting.

Open public hearing.

There were no speakers.

Close public hearing.

Chair Knox White inquired whether the 500 passenger per day on the Alameda-Harbor Bay ferry indicated one-way or round-trip. *Mr. Sanchez* replied that was the total count.

Chair Knox White cited the paragraph explaining the difficulties with the 65-minute ferry meeting the transit service, and inquired whether a table could be included to clarify the difficult language. He noted that on page 13 (Fare Structure) read, "Alameda-Oakland proposed fare..." and inquired whether another fare hike was being proposed. *Mr. Sanchez* noted that the fare hike approved by City Council approximately two months ago must go to the CPUC for approval; that process is not yet complete, and he hoped that a decision would be made soon. He confirmed that was not another fare hike.

Chair Knox White noted that the language on page 15 (Objective 2) read, "...provide comfortable, reliable and frequent ferry service." He noted that Measure 1 discussed a minimum fare box recovery, and pointed out that in several places, different numbers

were used, including comparisons to different non-ferry modes of transportation. He recommended that the state transit fare box average of 27-28% be used, as well as the recovery ratio for the highway system by CalTrans.

Chair Knox White inquired whether Objective 3 on page 16 (Integrated Ticketing) included any discussion between the City and Translink. *Mr. Sanchez* noted that it had been discussed with MTC, but there was no current implementation schedule or funding available at this time. *Chair Knox White* suggested adding that as a goal, stating that the region should start moving to a single fare card.

Chair Knox White noted that Objective 3 on page 16 (Measure 2) read, "Transit schedules should be coordinated to allow easy, convenient transfers between ferries and land-side transit." He noted that it mentioned that the ferries ran at a 65-minute headway, and inquired whether that was because it was the shortest possible headway.

Chair Knox White noted that Objective 5 on page 16 read, "The ferry system should provide ample reserve capacity in case of disruptions to land-based transportation systems." He believed that seemed to run counter to the cost-efficiency argument. He believed it would be interesting if the plan discussed that issue. *Mr. Sanchez* replied that the City has participated in the Spare the Air program, and cited the recent closure of the Bay Bridge and other heavy service days. They used additional carrying capacity from the contractor, Blue and Gold Fleet, which would meet that goal without having the additional carrying capacity on their books.

Chair Knox White noted that on page 18, Service and System Evaluations, the total City expenses between FY2002-03 and FY2006-07 nearly tripled for the Alameda-Oakland Ferry Service; at the same time, the Alameda-Harbor Bay service decreased significantly. He inquired whether that was the City's portion of the fuel increases, and inquired whether the City would take on more expense for the Alameda-Oakland Ferry. *Mr. Sanchez* confirmed that the two contractors operated on different contract structures. The Alameda-Oakland Ferry was contracted with Blue and Gold Fleet, which was a cost-plus-fixed-fee arrangement. He added that the City paid Blue and Gold Fleet approximately \$280,000 in annual fixed fees for overhead, profit, etc. He noted that the other ferry expenses (fuel, labor, insurance) were passed through to the City for payment by the City. The Alameda-Harbor Bay Ferry service was operated under a fixed subsidy agreement, whereby they agree to the operating subsidy at the beginning of the year, and the ferry operator, Harbor Bay Maritime, would be required to operate and provide the required service at that level of funding. He noted that it used a modified fixed subsidy agreement because the fuel was paid for on a direct pass-through basis.

Chair Knox White noted that it was a significant surprise when the dollar bridge toll was passed under Regional Measure 2, including language to pass that money onto the Alameda ferry system, and other area regional systems, going to the WTA. He inquired whether there was any way to tap into those funds under Regional Measure 2. *Mr. Sanchez* replied that there was no way to access Regional Measure 2 funds. *Chair Knox White* requested that staff look into that possibility under the WETA arrangement. He

noted that overall, the report looked good with strong metrics in ridership, fare box recovery, and fee reduction, especially in comparison to other regional transit.

Commissioner Schatmeier inquired whether the ticket structures for the two services could be linked. *Mr. Sanchez* noted that under the Harbor Bay Maritime operating agreement for the Alameda-Harbor Bay Ferry, Harbor Bay Maritime retained all fare box revenue. Fare box revenue for the Alameda-Oakland Ferry is collected by Blue and Gold Fleet, but is credited to the City to offset operating expenses. He added that last year, there was almost a dollar difference in round-trip fares between the two ferry services. With the new proposed fare increase, they would become closer, but would still be different. He noted that both contracts will expire June 30, 2009. They intended to ask if there would be one operator willing to operate both ferry services. Under one contractual structure, he expected that a unified fare structure would be possible for both services.

Commissioner Ratto moved to endorse the SRTP as presented. *Commissioner Krueger* seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

6. OLD BUSINESS

6A. Proposed Revisions to Alameda Municipal Code Regarding Reassignment of Technical Transportation Team Responsibilities, Modification of Transportation Commission Responsibilities and Appeal Process for Transportation Operational Decisions. *Outcome: TC to comment and endorse the proposed revisions to Alameda Municipal Code.*

Staff Bergman presented the staff report, and noted that the Transportation Commission had supported the concept of the initial changes, and the final language was being brought back for inclusion in the Municipal Code. He noted that the TTT, which is currently responsible for many of the operational issues in the City, and that the primary change would be a streamlined process. At this time, residents appealing decisions may have to attend multiple meetings going through the TTT, as well as the TC and the City Council. The recommended change would be to transfer the TTT's responsibilities to the Public Works Director, with the TC acting as the preliminary appeal body, and the City Council acting as the final appeal body.

Staff Bergman noted that the TC's responsibilities were modified so that the TC may comment on specific projects, as opposed to only plans, at the request of the City Council. The TC would also provide comments and recommendations regarding various transportation-related documents.

Open public hearing.

There were no speakers.

Close public hearing.

Commissioner McFarland inquired whether 8-2.5, which discussed traffic marking, signage and striping, also addressed the visibility of traffic signs and keeping them clear of obstruction by vegetation. *Staff Khan* confirmed that was correct. *Commissioner McFarland* noted that has become a problem in some areas.

Commissioner McFarland noted that 8-7.1 addressed prohibited parking at red curbs, and inquired about instances where someone has painted the curb red by their property. *Staff Khan* noted that is dealt with through the Police Department, who enforces the red curbs. If a property owner paints the curb in front of their home, the City maintenance staff would be able to tell the difference because the City uses a specific color for curb painting. In those instances, the City would contact the property owner to have them remove it; otherwise, the City would remove the paint and charge the owner.

Commissioner McFarland inquired what part of the Municipal Code addressed the maximum length of time for on-street vehicle parking in an otherwise legal parking spot. *Staff Khan* replied that the maximum length of time was 72 hours, as described in the Vehicle Code; another section of the Municipal Code referred to the Vehicle Code.

Commissioner McFarland noted that 8-8.1 addressed angled parking, and inquired whether the Transportation Commission had responsibility for the removal of angled parking. He noted that he was referred to the angled parking on Central. *Staff Khan* understood that the responsibility was currently with City Council, but would be assigned to the Transportation Commission. He noted that while the responsibility for the removal may not be clearly stated, he understood that it would be brought back to the Transportation Commission. He would be open to any recommendations to enhance the language.

Commissioner McFarland expressed concern about safety for cyclists. *Staff Khan* noted that was a good point, and suggested enhancing the language to cover the removal of angled parking.

Chair Knox White did not believe that angled parking was appropriate everywhere, but that parallel parking was generally considered appropriate.

Commissioner McFarland inquired whether 8-11 (Loading Zones) addressed the hours that a loading zone was in effect. *Staff Khan* replied that loading zone time restrictions were established by the Public Works Director.

Commissioner McFarland inquired whether only commercial vehicles were allowed to use loading zones. *Staff Khan* replied that it would be any vehicle if they were in the process of loading or unloading passenger or commercial goods.

Commissioner Krueger inquired about 8-11.1(b)(2), addressing bus stops without a red curb. *Staff Khan* confirmed that it addressed bus stops without a red curb, but with a time limitation. *Commissioner Krueger* inquired whether a school bus stop was considered to

be a loading zone. *Staff Khan* confirmed that it was for passenger loading and unloading. If a red curb is installed, they are also used for bus layovers. A discussion of the curb colors and time restrictions ensued.

Chair Knox White noted that if the Transportation Commission wished to make a policy recommendation, it could request that the item come back at a future meeting.

Chair Knox White noted that 2-8.1 cited the additional language that “The Transportation Commission may, at the discretion of the City Manager ...” to ensure that future commissions did not ask to examine every stoplight and stop sign. He believed it could be read in future years that the City Manager may decide whether the Transportation Commission could discuss an issue or not. He added that the Transportation Commission answered directly to the City Council, and acted at the City Council’s discretion. He questioned whether the language referencing the City Manager should be included.

Chair Knox White noted that many City projects that would need to move forward would never come to the Transportation Commission for comment because of the potential delay in receiving City Council recommendations; he believed the Planning Board would already have approved the item by that time. He suggested that the word “major” be inserted before “transportation plans,” as well as removing the two caveats. He believed the language missing from the Ordinance was the Council’s ability to call for a review. He suggested the addition of the following language: “The Transportation Commission may review major transportation plans, including projects and documents.” *Staff Khan* noted that staff would be amenable to that change.

Chair Knox White noted that Section 8-8.1A was deleted, with respect to parallel parking, and inquired about the reason why parallel parking was not included in that section. *Staff Khan* did not believe it had ever been included in the Municipal Code. He noted that parallel parking was provided as part of the design or function of the street, and was assumed to be available unless explicitly prohibited.

Chair Knox White noted that 8-5.1 addressed speed limits and car pool parking, and noted that several plans, including the General Plan, that already addressed street speed limits in the City. He inquired whether it was necessary to mention the fact that City policy on those issues already existed. *Staff Khan* clarified that the Public Works Director may not take action that was against any plans or policies, and should establish the process. With respect to the enforcement of speed limits, he noted that if a radar gun is to be used, a speed survey must be used as back-up. He noted that it was important to work with the Police Department with respect to Code requirements.

Chair Knox White noted that several items would be removed from the Municipal Code, including streetsweeping, specifics about off-street parking lots and official parking lots, removing the authority for placement of stop signs from the City Council and giving it to the Public Works Director.

Staff Khan summarized the changes as described by the Commissioners.

Commissioner Ratto moved to accept the suggested changes as presented. *Commissioner Schatmeier* seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

7. NEW BUSINESS

7A. Agreement between AC Transit and the City on Formalizing Collaboration on Projects of Mutual Interest. Outcome: TC to comment and endorse draft agreement

Staff Khan presented the staff report, and described the background of this matter, and language in the draft agreement. The City wanted to ensure that there was no transfer of liability. He added that the formatting had been improved, and that exhibits with contact information and responsibilities had been included.

Open public hearing.

There were no speakers.

Close public hearing.

Chair Knox White noted that on page 4, Section 3.3, read, “The City will include AC Transit on the mailing for agendas and staff reports for the Transportation Commission and Transportation Technical Team meetings.” He suggested removing mention of the TTT in that language, and that the Planning Board agendas be sent to AC Transit as well.

Chair Knox White wanted to ensure that riders would be notified with respect to potential bus stop removal.

Commissioner Schatmeier noted that in the Recitals section, a passage discussed the City and AC Transit working together on expanding transit service for redeveloping areas within the City. He did not object to that in principle, but if there was expansion of service to be contemplated, he believed it should be considered Citywide.

Commissioner Ratto moved to accept the Agreement between AC Transit and the City on Formalizing Collaboration on Projects of Mutual Interest and the suggested changes as presented. *Commissioner Schatmeier* seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0.

8. Staff Communications

Staff Bergman noted that Jim Gleich, the Deputy General Manager of AC Transit, suffered a massive heart attack on Sunday evening, and went into surgery earlier in the day. He added that he had worked with him for some time, and that he has been very supportive of transit in Alameda, and requested that everyone keep Jim in their thoughts.

Staff Khan requested that the Broadway-Jackson project be kept as a standing item in the agenda, and noted that a meeting had been held earlier in the day regarding initial analyses that the consultant had conducted on this project. He added that they were examining some alternatives that address the ramps from the Posey Tube to Jackson, using the intersection of 7th and Harrison, addressing the right turn and bicycle crossings.

Staff Khan noted that in the October meeting, staff would bring forward the Line 63 item, and that the parking study would probably be presented. He noted that on October 3, during the Walking School Bus event, Public Works, the Police Department and the Unified School District would collaborate substantially. He noted that at least three schools would participate that day, and hoped that participation would continue beyond that day. He noted that it was driven by PTAs and parents.

Staff Bergman advised that the Interagency Liaison Committee with the City was held on September 4. He noted that the Ecopass program was discussed, and that AC Transit has been developing a standardized methodology to broaden the use of pass programs among the various agencies and employment sites. He added that on September 5, the AC Transit Board approved the pricing matrix. The City is considering implementing such a program for City employees, and that it could potentially include other employers in the City. He noted that the next meeting of the ILC was tentatively scheduled for December 4, 2007.

Chair Knox White noted that there was a community meeting on September 10 regarding the lighting in the tubes. He noted that last night, the bike path was closed, and some employees who work in Alameda but use the Tube to commute home were met by CHP officers and told they could not use the Tube to get home. He added that Union Pacific proposed the increased use of a railroad crossing on the Oakland side of the Park Street Bridge. He noted that this resulted from Union Pacific's loss of an easement due to widening of I-880. He described the new route, and added that construction equipment showed up the previous day without discussing it with Oakland. He was concerned that CalTrans did not include Alameda and Oakland in these significant decisions.

Staff Khan noted that the City's major concern was the potential impact on the operation of the bridge, as well as having rail go through the intersection of Ford and 23rd, and then crossing to Glascock, and then next to Fruitvale. He noted that staff was working through their legal channels, and that a legal challenge was one option.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.